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# Communist China's General Purpose and Air Defense Forces

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*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate:*

The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense, and the NSA.

**Concurring:**

Vice Adm. Rufus Taylor, Deputy Director, Central Intelligence

Mr. Thomas L. Hughes, the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State

Lt. Gen. Joseph F. Carroll, the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

Lt. Gen. Marshall S. Carter, the Director, National Security Agency

Mr. Howard C. Brown, Jr., the Assistant General Manager, Atomic Energy Commission

**Abstaining:**

Mr. William O. Cregar, for the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the subject being outside of his jurisdiction.

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## COMMUNIST CHINA'S GENERAL PURPOSE AND AIR DEFENSE FORCES

### THE PROBLEM

To assess the impact of Communist China's political turmoil on its military establishment and to estimate the capabilities of the general purpose and air defense forces.

### CONCLUSIONS

A. Communist China's armed forces (known collectively as the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA)) have been drawn deeply into the political turmoil that has afflicted China for the past two and a half years. The PLA has taken on heavy responsibilities for police and public security work and has acquired a wide variety of administrative and control functions in the economy and government.

B. The PLA has also undergone a heavy purge, especially of its top echelons. Line combat units have so far largely escaped the purges. The PLA itself has been divided at various levels and buffeted by the politics of the Cultural Revolution. Thus far the PLA has taken its cue from the political leaders of the country, but in general it has emerged as a moderate force loosely aligned with the government bureaucracy and others whose primary concern is with order, stability, and national security.

C. Political factionalism, the general deterioration of social order in China, and the many extra duties that have been imposed on the PLA have degraded Chinese military capabilities largely in terms of readiness, morale, and discipline. But in situations where China's vital interests were at stake, many of the ill effects of the Cultural Revolution could probably be fairly quickly overcome. Units, equip-

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ment, and the command structure remain intact, and defensive dispositions are largely unimpaired. Thus the PLA could provide a strong defense of the mainland and would be capable of effective military operations should the existence of the Communist regimes in North Vietnam and North Korea be threatened.

D. Conceivably the political, social, and economic situation could deteriorate to the point where the PLA's combat effectiveness would suffer severe damage. On the other hand, a consistent trend toward moderation could enable it to regain full effectiveness within a fairly short time. On balance, we believe that the situation will not get so bad that the PLA would be unable to maintain a capability to function as a fighting force; nevertheless, much of its time and energy will continue to be diverted by nonmilitary activity and political stress. For the coming year at least, the power and authority of the PLA are likely to increase. Peking will be dependent on the PLA as the only effective instrument of control, and the military will probably play a significant role in the political reorganization currently in process.

E. Except for the disruption caused by the Cultural Revolution, there have been few developments in China's general purpose and air defense forces of great significance during the past year. Positioning of Chinese forces has changed little and continues to reflect concern with defense. The Chinese have not given a high priority to equipment programs that would improve China's ability to project its power over long distances outside its borders. The limitations of China's economic and technical capacities are such that conventional forces will remain deficient in modern equipment at least until well into the 1970's.

F. Nevertheless, the modernization program for the air defense and general purpose forces is moving ahead gradually on a fairly broad front along the following lines:

1. *The Army.* Chinese combat units vary considerably in quality and strength, but their firepower is increasing with the addition of more medium tanks and artillery. The levels of equipment the Chinese seem to be aiming at cannot be reached throughout the army much before 1975. No significant increase in the number of combat units is anticipated, although some increase in manpower might occur in response to the army's assumption of widened civil responsibilities.

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2. *Air.* A growing inventory of Mig-19 fighters, addition of better radar, and a slow deployment program for surface-to-air missiles are improving China's air defense. We continue to believe that the Chinese will produce a new fighter, and we now believe that the chances are about even that it will be the Mig-21. If the Chinese do not intend to produce this aircraft, it would be four or five years before a fighter significantly more advanced than the Mig-19 could be available. There has been no significant change in the tactical strike and air support capabilities of the Chinese Air Force and Naval Air Force.

3. *The Navy.* Production of R-class submarines and guided-missile patrol boats continues, but at a slower rate than had been anticipated. Other types of patrol and torpedo boats are being turned out in considerable numbers and deployment of a coastal defense cruise-missile system seems to be picking up pace.

## DISCUSSION

### I. THE PEOPLES LIBERATION ARMY AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

#### The Peoples Liberation Army's Political and Government Role

1. During the past year or two the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) has emerged as the only remaining cohesive force in China with a nationwide system of command and control. As the authority of the party and the government bureaucracy declined under the Cultural Revolution, the PLA was drawn into the maintenance of order and stability. In the process it acquired a wide variety of administrative and control functions in the economy and the government. It has largely supplanted police and public security units in many areas. It supervises much of China's transportation network and functions as overseer in major industrial plants. And it has been assigned new tasks in carrying out propaganda in schools, factories, and rural communes.

2. The PLA has also become heavily involved in politics. Military control commissions were set up in the provinces to take over the party's central functions when the Cultural Revolution all but dismantled the party apparatus. Subsequently, revolutionary committees, the organizations around which Peking is seeking to build a new power structure, began gradually to replace the military commissions. In theory, the revolutionary committees are "three-way alliances" of the "revolutionary masses," the more revolutionary of the old party cadres, and the PLA. In practice, military officers dominate most of these new organizations. The military's dominance has been especially pronounced in committees established since the fall of 1967. In the 24 major administrative areas (out of

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a total of 29) where revolutionary committees have been set up, military men hold both the chairmanship and first vice chairmanship of eleven committees; they are chairmen of four other committees and first vice chairmen of six. Even in those committees where military men do not hold chairmanships, the effectiveness of these new government organs depends primarily upon the local military. The military is prominent in municipal and county governments as well.

3. The twists and turns of the Cultural Revolution have resulted in ambiguous and changing directives to the PLA during the various phases of the Revolution. At times it has been enjoined to "support the left but not any faction." At other times it has been directed to restore order and to maintain discipline. The PLA's response to these directives has been mixed. In general, it has tried to maintain an appearance of neutrality. In some areas, however, it has clearly and openly supported conservative factions. Moreover, as the PLA has assumed more and more local authority, it has itself come under attack by radical organizations. There have been occasions when Peking has dispatched units to crisis areas from the outside, apparently because Peking felt that these units would be more dependable in supporting leftist factions against local conservative forces. There is also good evidence that in some areas field units have taken opposite sides in factional disputes. There have apparently even been a few clashes between military units, though they seem to have been on a small scale and did not last long.

4. The PLA has been divided at various levels, subjected to purges, and buffeted by the politics of the Cultural Revolution. As its power and influence has grown, it has found itself heavily involved in local politics as well as in top level disputes. Thus far, the PLA has taken its cue from the political rulers of the country. In general, it has emerged as a moderate force loosely aligned with the government bureaucracy and others whose primary concern is with order, stability, and national security.

#### **The Purge of the Peoples Liberation Army**

5. The PLA was, of course, a political army from its inception. Yet, in recent years it had become increasingly professional, with many of its officers—despite their party ties—primarily concerned with developing its military capabilities and discipline. But, once the Cultural Revolution became a fact, it was inescapable that it should affect the PLA. As the most powerful and cohesive element in the force structure, it was a most important target for contending political factions. Moreover, its senior officers were political figures and by personal history and belief tied to the various contending civilian leaders. Though in its early stages the Cultural Revolution was fought out in the party arena, the growing intensity of the revolution and especially the emergence of public disorder brought the struggle to the PLA itself. Initially, with the emergence of Lin Piao as Mao's heir and the specific exemption of the PLA from the Cultural Revolution declared in August 1966, Mao and Lin acted as if the PLA was, or could be treated as, in their camp. Gradually, however, the PLA came under

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attack. Madame Mao in particular seems to have tried to exert increasingly greater control over the PLA and even supported campaigns against its key figures.

6. We believe that divisions over military and related policies were a factor, though perhaps a secondary one, which led Mao to initiate the Cultural Revolution. For example, China's economic problems and technological weaknesses have long provided ample grounds for discord over military priorities and resource allocation, particularly since such problems had been exacerbated by Mao's disastrous Great Leap Forward and his handling of Sino-Soviet relations. The war in Vietnam also must have provoked debate over the likelihood of war with the US, the proper strategy to follow if a confrontation occurred, and the advisability of "joint action" with the USSR against the US in Vietnam. And it seems quite clear that the longstanding issue of politics versus military professionalism was another source of friction and trouble.

7. In the earlier stages of the Cultural Revolution some military leaders were probably purged because of their policy differences with Mao. The later purges in the PLA, however, were probably more the result of the factional struggles that developed. Whatever may have been the policy issues or political struggles involved, the PLA has undergone a heavy purge, especially in its top echelons.

8. About half of the top central military leadership is known or believed to have been purged. The Military Affairs Committee of the party, the body responsible for military policy, has lost almost half of its standing members and has undergone a reorganization. In the Ministry of National Defense, three of eight vice ministers have been removed. The General Staff Department, which is responsible for coordinating combat operations, has lost two chiefs-of-staff, and at least five of its ten other principal officers have also fallen. The General Political Department, the organ through which the party exercises political control and surveillance in the PLA, has ceased to function at the center. The commanders of the armored forces, the railways corps, and apparently the artillery forces have been purged. The political commissars of the air force, navy, and the railway corps have fallen. About half of the casualties at the central level were military professionals and half were political specialists. Insofar as replacements for the purged figures have been identified, most seem to have been drawn from the professional wing of the PLA.

9. There has also been a heavy toll at the military region and military district levels. But the casualties at these levels have been mostly political officers. As far as is known, field armies, line divisions, and lower combat echelons have largely escaped the purge, at least to date. Many commanders have survived intensive attack by militant Red Guard units, and a number have been formally endorsed by Peking in the past several months. Yet there is good evidence that the behavior of certain field units has not pleased leaders at the center.

10. A crisis occurred in the summer of 1967. The PLA came under an especially violent attack, but suddenly this effort was halted and then repudiated.

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Events surrounding this reversal suggest that a group of PLA leaders resisted the political attack against them and that Mao and the radicals were made acutely aware that they had pushed the PLA too far. At any rate, following the summer of 1967, the harsh line toward the PLA was abandoned and several ultraradicals identified with it were themselves purged.

#### Consequences for the The Military Establishment

11. The purge and reorganization of national level military organizations and the preoccupation of top level political leaders must have seriously interfered with policy guidance and overall military planning. Certainly the tension and stress under which the badly depleted leadership operates have not been conducive to thoughtful consideration of complex military problems. Normal staff and administrative functions almost certainly have been affected also. Despite events of the summer of 1967, an atmosphere of uncertainty, suspicion, and fear almost certainly has persisted.

12. Even though the formal military command structure remains intact, morale and discipline in the PLA must have deteriorated. The military forces inevitably have been affected by the disruption and divisiveness that the Cultural Revolution has brought to Chinese society in general. All ranks of the PLA, through their expanded control and police duties, have had ample opportunity to view the more vivid manifestations of the struggle going on in their country. There are reports that troops are weary of incessant political indoctrination and frustrated by the handicaps under which they are compelled to operate in dealing with civil disorder. Political attacks against many senior officers and the strains and antagonisms caused by factionalism within the PLA have only added to the problem.

13. The many extra duties that have been imposed on the PLA have brought about a decline in the combat readiness of the PLA. Probably something on the order of 30 or 40 percent of the PLA's time during the past year or so has been taken up by activities in some way connected with the Cultural Revolution. The brunt of these new duties has been borne by the army. The navy and air force, though involved also, have apparently not had their routine as badly disrupted. The damage done thus far to combat readiness could be fairly quickly repaired once the PLA was relieved of its extra duties and was permitted to resume its normal activities. The principal problem is that, given the sorry state of Peking's administrative and governing apparatus, the central authorities cannot dispense with the PLA in its new role.

14. There is mounting evidence that a substantial amount of damage has been done to military production and research. The Cultural Revolution has been carried into the National Defense Scientific and Technological Commission and into all six of the ministries responsible for military production. Production rates of many military items cannot be estimated in detail, but there is sufficient evidence to say that nearly all military production has been reduced to some degree.

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The drop of about one-third in the output of Mig-19 jet fighters in 1967 was almost certainly due to economic dislocations caused by the Cultural Revolution, and construction of naval craft has slowed down.

## II. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING CAPABILITIES

### General

15. Except for the disruptions caused by the Cultural Revolution, there have been few developments in China's general purpose and air defense forces of any great significance during the past year. The positioning of forces-in-being has changed little and continues to reflect concern with defense. As a result of the war in Vietnam, the South China area continues to have some priority in air defense preparations, and naval forces in that area continue to be strengthened. There has been no significant strengthening of ground troops along China's southern border, however. There has been no noticeable Chinese military reaction to the buildup of Soviet forces along the Sino-Soviet border and in Mongolia. During the tension in Korea over the Pueblo incident last winter, we detected no military reaction whatsoever on the part of the Chinese.

16. In the main, the Chinese are not building forces or developing capabilities on a large scale designed specifically for out-of-country operations. Equipment programs that would improve China's ability to project its power over long distances outside its borders seem still not to have a high priority, and much of the conventional equipment being produced is best suited to air and coastal defense.

### Manpower and Conscription

17. In 1967 Peking imposed a moratorium on conscription and demobilization, but in early 1968 both were resumed. About the same time, Peking apparently reduced the terms of service by two years, after having extended them as recently as 1965. Apparently the terms of service now are two years for the infantry, three years for other branches of the ground forces, naval forces ashore, and the air force, and four years for naval forces afloat. We do not know what motivated this change in policy. One of the purposes may be to subject larger numbers, including some troublesome underemployed youths, to intensive instruction and discipline. It may also be intended to make more experienced veterans available for the militia in order to stiffen the discipline of that force. In two periods of crisis—during the food shortages which followed the Great Leap Forward and in the recent factional fighting—the militia did prove to have been unruly.

18. We think it unlikely that Peking intends any significant increase in the number of combat units. It is possible, however, that some increase in manpower is intended to assist the PLA in performing its many civil duties. The new conscription policy will place the additional task of training larger numbers

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of raw recruits on the already overburdened PLA. Technical proficiency will also suffer, but this can be largely offset if, as seems likely, the PLA manages to maintain an experienced cadre through a policy of selective retention.

### **Military Production**

19. It is becoming increasingly clear that the Chinese are requiring longer lead times in the development and production of military hardware than would seem reasonable on the basis of Soviet or Western experience. We also find that our projections of the quantities of equipment that the Chinese are likely to produce have frequently been too high. The disruptions of the Cultural Revolution partly account for Chinese production problems, but more fundamental factors are China's shortage of highly trained scientific and technical manpower, its lack of experience in managing complex production processes, and possibly the pinch of economic stringency. There are exceptions, of course.

### **The Chinese Communist Army**

20. The Chinese Communist Army (CCA), which numbers about 2.3 million, includes some 118 combat divisions. Disclosures in Chinese news media respecting the activities of military units in the Cultural Revolution and continuing exploitation of other sources has increased our confidence in this estimate. There are only a few cases where there is any substantial doubt concerning a division's existence. Our information is insufficient to determine the strength and equipment levels of many units. But we do know that there is considerable unevenness in their strength and quality.

21. The modernization of the CCA is making gradual progress. Old equipment is being replaced and units are being supplied with more artillery and armored equipment. Though we are as yet unable to gauge the program in detail, the levels of equipment the Chinese seem to be aiming for could not be reached throughout the CCA much before 1975 at the present rate of procurement. Even then, the CCA's firepower and mobility would be well below current Western or Soviet standards, and the Chinese would face serious deficiencies in conventional combat against modern opposition.

22. The main Chinese battle tank is the T-59 (a copy of the Soviet T-54), and we estimate normal annual production to be about 400 to 500. We have no evidence of self-propelled artillery in production or use. There is good evidence that the artillery component of some infantry divisions is being upgraded with the introduction of additional 85 mm field guns.

23. There are indications that the Chinese missile program includes work on missiles considerably smaller than a medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM).

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We are not sure what the Chinese have in mind, but we are inclined to doubt that this activity portends the early deployment of a tactical ballistic missile.<sup>1</sup> It is unlikely that the Chinese would deploy such a system without nuclear warheads, and we believe that the limited supply of fissionable material will be committed to the strategic weapons program. Thus, we estimate that it will be several years before the Chinese could deploy a tactical ballistic missile system.

#### **Air Defense and Air Forces**

24. China's air defense system continues to show improvement. The air surveillance network has been improved and extended into some new areas. Expansion of SAM facilities is proceeding rather slowly, but the Mig-19 inventory is growing. Deployment of these fighters to operational units in border and coastal regions of south and east China has improved air defense in these areas. The air defense system has responded vigorously to isolated intrusions into Chinese airspace, particularly in south China, and it has had considerable success against these intrusions. Air defense control and communications facilities are also improving, but remain a serious deficiency. Despite these improvements, China could not cope with a major air attack and will not be able to do so for at least the next several years.

25. We have been expecting the Chinese to begin turning out Mig-21s for about two years, but they still have not started production. An airframe plant and an aircraft engine plant in Chengtu in Szechwan Province have been the prime candidates for producing Mig-21s. Although the Chinese are clearly concerned with improving their air defense and the Mig-21 would make a significant contribution to their effort, they may have encountered difficulties. Mig-21 engine technology, for example, is considerably more difficult than that for the Mig-19. Or production may have been delayed for economic or other reasons.

26. It appears to us the Chinese have two options: to try to produce the Mig-21 or to develop a fighter essentially of their own design. Of the two, producing the Mig-21 is probably the less difficult and more rapid route. Thus we believe that there is still an even chance that they will produce the Mig-21. If the Chinese do not intend to produce this aircraft, it would be at least four or five years before a fighter significantly more advanced than the Mig-19 could be available.

27. The question of Chinese intention to produce the TU-16 medium bomber presents a problem similar to that of the Mig-21. We are quite certain that in the late 1950's the Soviets were providing the Chinese with the plant and technical help for producing the TU-16. After the Soviets withdrew their support in 1960, the Chinese proceeded with construction. We do not know, however, what aircraft they might produce at the plant or when production might start. Considering the uses to which a medium bomber could be put, we

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<sup>1</sup> One of the possibilities is that this activity relates to a missile for the G-class submarine. This possibility will be examined in forthcoming NIE 13-8-68, "Communist China's Strategic Weapons Program."

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believe there is still about an even chance that the TU-16 will be produced some time during the next several years. If they are in fact going to produce the TU-16 and the first unit were to emerge soon, it would be several years before sufficient aircraft would be available to constitute a significant adjunct to the general purpose forces. Rather, the Chinese would probably look to the TU-16 mainly as a carrier for nuclear weapons.

28. There are probably some 15 SAM battalions currently in the field. We estimate that something on the order of 10 or so new units will be deployed in 1968, with as many as 35 to 40 additional units by the end of 1970. The Chinese SAM is a copy of the Soviet SA-2 system, but the Chinese have introduced an improvement to the radar equipment which reduces the system's vulnerability to electronic countermeasures. An antireconnaissance mission continues to govern Chinese SAM deployment, but there probably will be a gradual transition to a strategic point defense over the next several years.

29. There apparently has been no significant change in the tactical strike and air support capabilities of the CCAF. It still depends on old IL-28 light bombers assigned to the air force and navy and a few fighter regiments equipped with Mig-15/Mig-17s which have been assigned a ground attack role. Though the purchase of 14 AN-12 transport aircraft from the USSR has helped some; the Chinese still have an extremely limited airlift and airborne assault capability.

#### Naval Forces

30. The composition, deployment, and training of Chinese naval forces all indicate that the primary mission of the Chinese Communist Navy (CCN) continues to be coastal defense. Naval construction programs and certain trends in training indicate the Chinese want to increase generally their capabilities and to extend their defensive sea frontier outward. The prospects are for fairly slow progress to these ends.

31. Construction of R-class submarines continues but slowed down beginning in 1966, and no additional launching is expected until 1969. The submarine force is now being equipped with deck-mounted bow sonars. Several types of coastal patrol craft are being turned out in considerable numbers. The guided missile patrol boat program is continuing, but at a considerably slower pace than we anticipated. The Chinese are apparently about to begin more extensive deployment of a coastal cruise-missile defense with the Samlet or Styx system. The Samlet is considered the more likely because of its longer range.

### III. MILITARY CAPABILITIES AND POLICIES

#### Capabilities

32. As indicated above, the Cultural Revolution has degraded Chinese military capabilities largely in terms of readiness, morale, and discipline. But units and equipment are largely intact and defensive dispositions largely unimpaired.

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Thus, in situations where China's vital interests were at stake, many of the ill effects of the Cultural Revolution could probably be fairly quickly overcome. The PLA would be capable of providing a strong defense of the mainland should China come under external threat. We believe it would also be capable of effective military operations should the existence of the Communist regimes in North Vietnam and North Korea be threatened.

33. At the same time, local situations have substantially reduced the PLA's capabilities in particular areas. In Tibet, for example, Peking would have to put an end to the prolonged factional strife before Chinese forces could be as formidable as they were in the Sino-Indian crisis of 1962 and 1965. In Fukien Province, opposite Taiwan, and in Yunnan and Kwangsi Province on China's Southeast Asian frontier, the PLA has been caught up in serious and protracted political strife. As matters now stand, before it could undertake military operations in these areas, Peking would have to move in additional troops to take over administrative and control duties vacated by combat units and to ensure that transportation lines were kept open. And the central authorities are probably more reluctant than in the past to consider the use of ground forces in these areas so long as the political turmoil continues.

34. Whether Chinese military capabilities will improve or further decline will, of course, depend greatly on the course of the Cultural Revolution. Conceivably the situation could deteriorate to the point where the PLA's combat effectiveness would suffer severe damage. On the other hand, a consistent trend toward moderation could enable the PLA to regain full effectiveness within a fairly short time. The situation is not likely to get so bad that the PLA would be unable to function as a fighting force, but much of its time and energy is likely to continue to be diverted by nonmilitary activity and political stress.

#### **General Trends in Military Policy**

35. Despite the political turmoil, the military sector will almost certainly retain its high priority in the allocation of resources, and strategic missiles and nuclear weapons will continue to have the strongest claim of all. This will permit a general, but only gradual, improvement in the equipment of the general purpose and air defense forces. As the process of modernization goes forward, however, the Chinese will face steeply rising economic costs, and as they attempt to move ahead with original weapons research and development there will be a further stretching of scarce scientific and technical resources. China's need for highly trained specialists has been seriously compromised by the two-year closure of its universities, and the Cultural Revolution has appreciably weakened the economic underpinnings of Peking's military ambitions. With economic flexibility thus reduced, decisions over resource allocation may become increasingly difficult and constitute another source of friction in high councils.

36. Political uncertainties preclude a judgment regarding the decisions on military policy which will be made. It may be that Mao, though he probably

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has supporters in the military, does not now dare to challenge the military by trying to make fundamental changes or to inaugurate policies certain to be resisted. It is not even known that he wishes to do so. In any case, dissension in the top leadership and the regime's dependence on the PLA in running the country might forestall any major organizational changes or shuffling of priorities in the near term.

#### **The Peoples Liberation Army's Future Political Role**

37. The future of China as well as that of the PLA will depend greatly upon the relative power position of the PLA and its ability to exert influence on national policy formulation. For the coming year at least, it seems likely that the power and authority of the PLA will increase. Peking will be dependent on the PLA as the only effective instrument of control. And the PLA will probably play a significant role in the political reorganization currently in process. It will thus be in a position to expand its power at local levels and probably at the center as well, should it choose to do so. And it is likely to try to work for moderation of the Cultural Revolution and the restoration of order in the country.

38. If the PLA's position should be enhanced, the Maoists might feel compelled to attack it once again. Or a crisis could arise if Mao should try to "revolutionize" the organization and inner workings of the PLA or to introduce radical innovations in military policy. In this case there would be serious degradation of the PLA's capabilities. If the central authorities proved unable or unwilling to restore order, the PLA's political position could become institutionalized to the point that the military would in effect be governing China. In this event, the PLA would probably be able in time to pull itself together and to restore its military power.

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## STATUS OF FORCES AND TRENDS

1. The Ministry of National Defense (MND), under the policy control of the Military Affairs Committee of the Party Central Committee, is the senior military authority. The chief staff components of the MND are its three general departments: the General Staff Department, the General Political Department (now no longer functioning at the center), and the General Rear Services Department. Most combat arms and services, such as the air force, navy, armor, artillery, and selected supporting organizations, are represented at the MND level by separate headquarters. However, there is no separate headquarters for the infantry forces, which are apparently controlled directly by the MND.

2. For administrative purposes, mainland China is divided into 13 military regions (see map), and these are divided into subordinate districts. These are territorial rather than operational commands and in most cases conform to provincial boundaries.

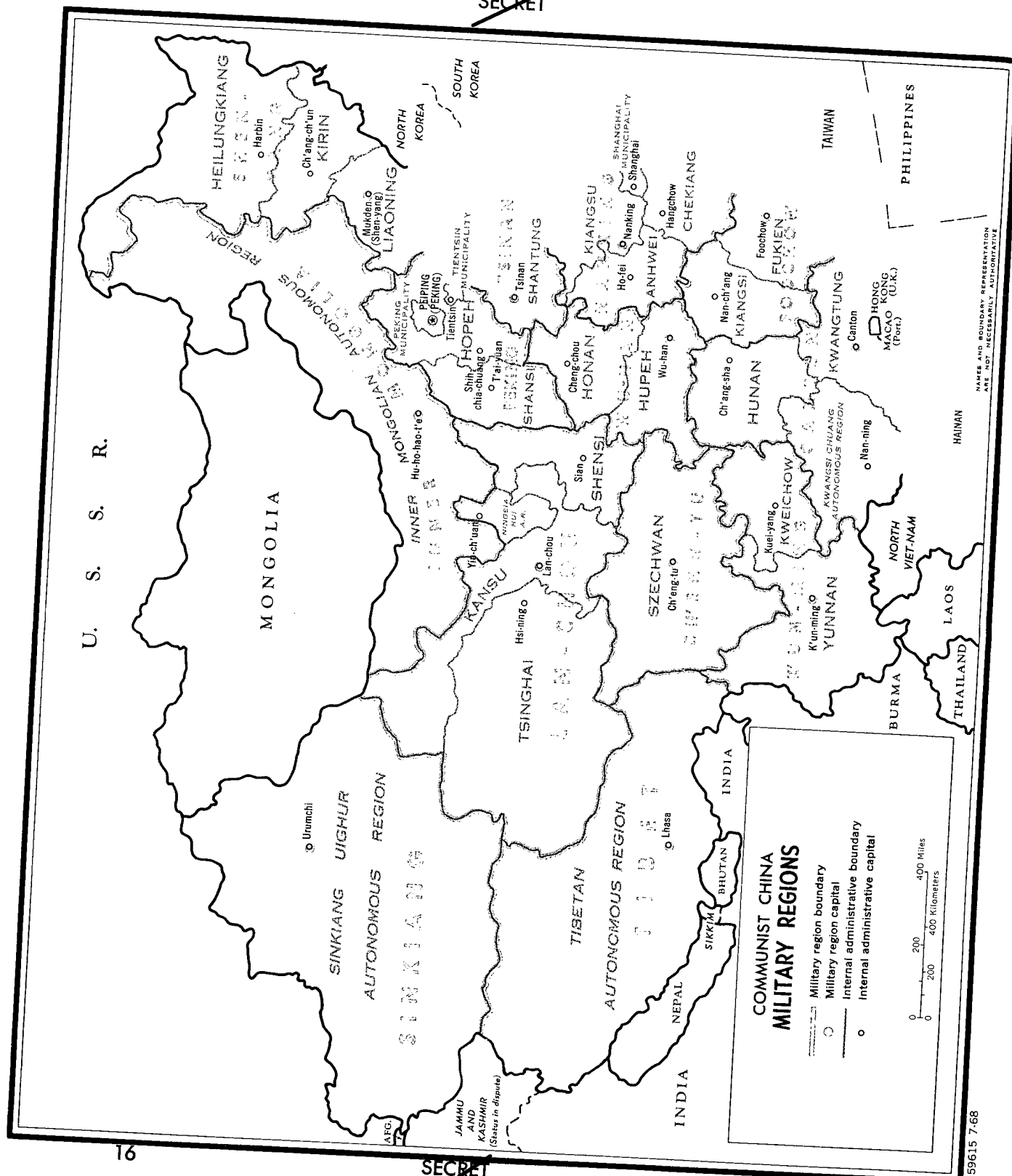
### A. Army

3. The main field command organization of the Chinese Communist Army (CCA), is the army, of which there are some 34. The typical army includes three infantry divisions and one artillery regiment, and probably numbers about 50,000 at full strength. There is nothing in the CCA analogous to the Soviet combined arms or tank armies. (See Table 1, page 17.)

4. Despite continuing progress in exploiting all available sources, we are not able to establish with confidence the actual personnel strength and the amounts of equipment on hand in the majority of CCA units. Some may be at or near the levels of the formal TO&E described below; others probably fall short of what the TO&E calls for, and some may be well below this standard.

5. We estimate that at full strength the standard infantry division would number about 14,000 officers and men. Its principal combat elements would be 3 infantry regiments, 1 artillery regiment, and 1 tank/assault gun regiment. Its heavy equipment, all of Soviet origin or design, would include 32 T-59 or T-34 tanks, and 10 SU-76 or SU-100 assault guns. The division would have approximately 175 mortars (82 mm, 120 mm, and 160 mm) and recoilless rifles (57 mm and 75 mm) as well as 55-60 guns and howitzers (57 mm, 76 mm, 85 mm, and 122 mm). In addition to the standard infantry division, the Chinese have light divisions for use in mountainous and other difficult terrain. These type units are similar to the standard division but do not have the tank/assault gun regiment, are equipped with lighter artillery, and have less organic vehicular transport.

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TABLE 1

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ARMY UNITS, JUNE 1968 <sup>a</sup>

	<u>NUMBER OF UNITS</u>
Army Headquarters .....	34
Combat Support Regiments (Army Subordinate) .....	19
15 Field Artillery	
4 AAA	
Combat Divisions .....	118
107 Infantry	
3 Airborne <sup>b</sup>	
5 Armored	
3 Cavalry	
Border/Internal Defense Division .....	20
Combat Support Divisions .....	24
15 Field Artillery	
3 Antitank	
6 AAA	
Service Support Divisions .....	11
11 Railway Engineer	
Combat Regiments (Independent) .....	19
6 Infantry	
8 Tank	
5 Cavalry	
Border/Internal Defense Regiments (Independent) .....	24
Combat Support Regiments (Independent) .....	51
12 Field Artillery	
6 Rocket Launcher	
26 Engineer	
7 Signal	
Service Support Regiments (Independent) .....	34
33 Motor Transport	
1 Railway Engineer	

<sup>a</sup> We estimate no substantial change in these figures through 1970.

<sup>b</sup> The three airborne divisions are subordinate to the CCAF, but are, for the purpose of this paper, included with the CCA.

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6. The Chinese armored division at full strength would number about 8,000 officers and men. Its principal combat elements would be 2 armored regiments, probably 1 infantry regiment, and probably 1 artillery regiment. The composition and equipment holdings of these divisions vary somewhat. As additional armored vehicles become available, a third armored regiment may be added to armored divisions.

7. The CCA has two types of field artillery divisions. The gun division would have about 5,400 men at full strength; it usually has 3 regiments equipped with 122 mm guns and 152 mm gun-howitzers. The howitzer division would have about 6,300 troops; it is normally organized into 3 artillery regiments equipped with 122 mm and 152 mm howitzers, and possibly a rocket launcher regiment, equipped with 132 mm or 140 mm multiple rocket launchers.

8. China has 3 airborne divisions, all subordinate to the Chinese Communist Air Force (CCAF), but little is known about their training, actual strength, holdings of equipment, or about Chinese doctrine concerning their employment. The estimated full strength of the Chinese airborne division is 10,300 officers and men. Its major subordinate elements include 3 regiments and a heavy weapons battalion. The division's equipment consists of individual weapons and light crew-served weapons, the largest of which is believed to be the 120 mm mortar. In peacetime, control of the 3 airborne divisions appears to rest with the CCAF, probably for ease of administration and training. In combat, however, they most likely would be considered as ground force troops, controlled at theater or field army level because of their mobility potential.

#### **Equipment**

9. Our knowledge of actual holdings of small arms is better than for other types of equipment.

Therefore, it is a reasonable assumption that all infantry units are equipped with, or have readily available, their full complement of individual crew-served infantry support weapons.

10. The amount of heavy equipment, such as artillery, tanks, and vehicles, either in the hands of the troops or maintained for quick access, is more difficult to determine. In the case of artillery, we believe that the number of weapons in the majority of units is at or near the number authorized. The number of guns in the 76 mm/85 mm gun battalion organic to the artillery regiment of the standard infantry division may be increasing in conjunction with the replacement of the 76 mm gun with a copy of the Soviet 85 mm field gun. On the other hand, we have not yet detected any increase in either the number of artillery divisions or the number of guns in this type of division. Evidence tending to confirm the presence of artillery thought to be organic to infantry regiments and armored divisions is limited.

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11. Some independent armored regiments and some regiments of the armored division may have fewer tanks than called for in the estimated TO&E. However, with continued armored vehicle production, tank holdings in these regiments could increase.

12. It has not been possible to determine the number of wheeled vehicles actually present and organic to CCA units. Although it is possible to estimate vehicle production, the ratio being consigned to the CCA for exclusive use by the military is unknown. It is highly probable that most transportation units respond to both military and civilian organizations. The number of vehicles assigned to these units may depend to a large degree upon civilian construction and production requirements of the area, rather than on a formal TO&E. In any emergency situation, it is expected that many of these vehicles would be assigned to specific military units.

#### *Air Support*

13. The Chinese have no separate tactical air command, and we have no information concerning PLA doctrine on the use of aircraft in a close support role. At present any tactical strike or ground support mission would fall principally on the 300 or so IL-28s in the CCAF and CCNAF, and a few fighter divisions in the CCAF which have ground attack as their primary mission. The remainder of the operational fighter force is assigned to air defense, with ground attack as a secondary role.

14. The Chinese have an extremely limited airborne assault capability. The principal limitation on the employment of Chinese airborne forces is the small size of the Chinese air transport fleet which consists largely of light transports and only a few medium transports. We have no evidence of preparations for production of a medium or heavy transport aircraft; however, the Chinese have recently indicated their desire to improve their airlift capability by purchasing 10 AN-12/Cubs from the Soviet Union. These medium transports are the only rear extraction aircraft in the Chinese inventory and their total force now numbers 14. The total lift capacity of the entire Chinese military transport force is about 12,600 lightly equipped troops. Total cargo capacity is about three million pounds. Civil aircraft could augment this capacity by about 50 percent. Depending on aircraft availability and various operational considerations, only a portion of this capacity could be utilized at a particular time.

#### **B. Air Force**

15. The CCAF and Naval Air Force (CCNAF), number approximately 270,000 men and are equipped with some 4,000 aircraft. The largest active operational unit in the CCAF is the Air Division, with each division consisting of 2 to 3 regiments. (See Table 2 for estimated numbers of military aircraft in operational units.)

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TABLE 2

ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT IN  
OPERATIONAL UNITS (1968-1970)

	1 JULY 1968			1 JULY 1970
	CCAF <sup>f</sup>	CCNAF	TOTALS	
Fighter				
Mig-15/Mig-17 Fagot/Fresco	1,760	290	2,050 <sup>a</sup>	1,850
Mig-19/Farmer	555	130	685 <sup>b</sup>	970 <sup>c</sup>
Mig-21/Fishbed	25	0	25	... <sup>d</sup>
Bomber				
TU-2/Bat	100	5	105	75
IL-28/Beagle	172	128	300	275
TU-4/Bull	13	0	13	12
TU-16/Badger	2	0	2	... <sup>d</sup>
Transport				
Medium	26	0	26	36
Light <sup>e</sup>	415	50	465	525
Reconnaissance				
BE-6/Madge	0	5	5	3
Helicopter				
MI-4/Hound	200	20	220	420

<sup>a</sup> Approximately 10-20 percent of the Mig-17s possess a limited all-weather intercept capability.

<sup>b</sup> Less than 10 percent possess limited all-weather capability. This figure includes some 100 aircraft that are associated with test and training facilities.

<sup>c</sup> In the absence of production of a follow-on aircraft, Mig-19 production probably would be extended and production rates kept at a higher rate than indicated in this table.

<sup>d</sup> In our view, the uncertainties respecting Chinese intentions and capabilities for producing Mig-21s and TU-16s are such that any projection is unwarranted at this time.

<sup>e</sup> Approximately 300 of these aircraft are AN-2s.

16. The present strength of the jet light bomber force is approximately 300. The number of sorties flown per month by the average IL-28 pilot is probably adequate to maintain minimum proficiency. Moreover, the fact that many pilots have been flying these same aircraft for up to 10 years would probably provide the bomber force with sufficient experience to conduct daytime medium or low altitude bombing missions. With only limited training done at night, it seems likely that the night and radar bombing capabilities of most crews would be very marginal.

17. The strength of both fighter and bomber units has been relatively stable during the past two years, though we have increased our estimates for some units owing to reassessment of the evidence and, of course, because of continuing

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Mig-19 production. Bomber attrition appears to have leveled off, and as new Mig-19s have been introduced into jet fighter units, some older aircraft have been phased out. IL-28 regiments currently have about 20 aircraft per unit and fighter regiments about 25 aircraft.

18. Probably less than 20 percent of the fighter force has airborne intercept equipment; however, the large majority of these are Mig-17s. The Soviets may have provided the Chinese with a limited number of AA-2 type missiles when they delivered the Mig-21s, and the Chinese may be producing some of these missiles themselves. They have the technical capability, though no production facilities have been identified.

19. The CCAF exercises its administrative and operational control through 10 air districts and a limited number of air elements assigned directly to Headquarters CCAF. Although there is no "Air Defense Command" in the US or Soviet sense, a staff element of CCAF Headquarters coordinates and controls all air defense operations, including those involving AC&W, antiaircraft artillery (AAA), surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), and fighters supplied from the CCAF and CCNAF. There are no known "commands" responsible for CCAF or CCNAF tactical, bomber, or transport operations.

20. The air defense command directs an extensive air surveillance and control network comprised of over 700 radar stations with about 1,250 radars. Since 1963 withdrawals of older radars have about equaled replacements, and the total number of radars in the network has not changed appreciably. The replacement radars have included sophisticated models of native Chinese design. Qualitative improvement of China's air defense radar network probably will continue to enjoy high priority.

21. There is a heavy concentration of radars in coastal areas, particularly in South China. The coastal radar net provides seaward early warning (EW) coverage to an estimated range of 200 nautical miles (n.m.) and ground control intercept (GCI) coverage to 175 n.m., for targets of medium bomber size. The heavy deployment of radars in coastal areas has improved performance against low level targets, but tracking of aircraft at altitudes lower than 2,000 feet above the terrain probably is still erratic and undependable. At present, GCI coverage is fairly complete throughout the eastern and central interior sections of China. All major population and industrial areas and almost all significant military targets are covered. Future developments will probably include expansion of the EW net on China's borders with the USSR, Mongolia, and India. GCI coverage will probably be reinforced in the interior of China and be extended to the border areas.

22. The air defense weapons system includes about 20 air and about 6 army AAA divisions and at least 7 army AAA divisions which are more lightly gunned.

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Some of these units are deployed in point defense of important targets. These AAA divisions are operationally subordinate to the CCAF District Headquarters in the area in which they are located.

23. In addition to their conventional AAA, the Chinese have a limited SAM capability. We estimate that there are about 15 SAM battalions currently in the field. There are probably up to 7 battalion sets in research and development support or training status. About 10 or so new units are expected during 1968, with perhaps as many as 35 to 40 additional units by the end of 1970.

24. The antireconnaissance mission continues to govern current Chinese SAM deployment. We believe, however, that as available SAM units increase, China will make a gradual transition to a strategic point defense intended to provide thin protection for its advanced weapons facilities, expected strategic missile deployment, and vital military industrial targets. We feel certain, though, that a substantial percentage of the SAM force will continue to be kept relatively mobile in an effort to interdict and deter aerial reconnaissance and the intrusions of other aircraft. SAM battalions utilized in this role will also be able to supplement strategic air defense requirements should the need arise.

### C. Navy

25. The Chinese Communist Navy (CCN) now includes 35 submarines, 4 destroyers, 8 destroyer escorts, 50 to 60 hydrofoil motor torpedo boats, and 10 to 14 guided missile patrol boats. Personnel strength is estimated at about 142,000, including 17,000 in the naval air force. The estimated inventory of naval units through mid-1970 is given in Table 3, page 23.

26. Over the past year or so, the most significant change in the Chinese naval force was the addition of over 75 smaller combatants composed almost equally of hydrofoil torpedo boats and fast patrol craft. These units provided a substantial augmentation of the coastal defense forces. One Kiangnan-class destroyer escort, one R-class submarine, and a small number of guided missile boats were also added.

27. Administrative and operational control over the naval forces is exercised through the Commander in Chief of the Navy. Orders from the Minister of National Defense are passed to the Commander in Chief of the CCN via the General Staff for information and coordination. CCN Headquarters is located in Peking. The CCN is comprised of three major fleets: North Sea Fleet with headquarters in Tsingtao, East Sea Fleet with headquarters in Shanghai, and South Sea Fleet with headquarters in Chan-Chiang (Fort Bayard).

28. The South Sea Fleet was strengthened in 1967 by the addition of two Kiangnan-class destroyers escorts and several squadrons of the Hu-chwan hydrofoil torpedo boats (PTH), continuing the trend begun in 1965. Compared with

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TABLE 3

NAVAL COMBATANTS AND SUPPORT SHIPS

	ESTIMATED INVENTORY	
	1 MAY 1968	MID-1970
Principal combatants		
Destroyer (DD)	4	4
Destroyer escort (DE)	8	9-10
Ballistic missile submarine (SSB)	1	1
Submarine (SS)	34 <sup>a</sup>	38 <sup>b</sup>
Patrol boats		
Patrol escort (PF)	16	16
Submarine chaser (PC)	23-24	26-28
Fast patrol boat (PTF)	130-150	180-200
Motor torpedo boat (PT)	150-170	140-160
Hydrofoil motor torpedo boat (PTH)	50-60	100-120
Motor gunboat (PGM)	90-110	120-140
Guided-missile patrol boat (PTG/PTFG)	10-14	15-25
Minesweepers		
Fleet (MSF)	20	28-34
Coastal (MSC & MSM)	35-45	40-50
Auxiliary (MSA)	20-30	30-40
Amphibious ships		
Tank landing ship (LST)	20(8)	20
Medium landing ship (LSM)	13(11)	13
Landing ship infantry (LSIL)	16	16
Utility landing craft (LCU)	10	10
Landing craft mechanized (LCM/LCT)	220-240	240-260
Auxiliaries		
Miscellaneous auxiliary (AG)	35	35-40
Light cargo ship (AKL)	10-20	15-25
Net laying ship (AN)	6	6
Oiler (AO/AOL)	15-25	20-30
Landing craft repair ship (ARL)	1	1
Small submarine tender (ASL)	1	1-2
Possible submarine rescue ship (ASR)	1	2-3
Ocean tug (ATA)	13-15	15-18
Service craft	330-360	350-380

Note: numbers in parentheses are additional units in merchant service.

<sup>a</sup> Including 21 W-class, 3 M/V-class, 4 S-1-class, and 6 R-class of which only 5 have been observed in operation.

<sup>b</sup> The additions are expected to be R-class units.

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the North and East Sea Fleets, the South Sea Fleet is still weak in patrol escorts, however, and does not have a submarine force. Shipbuilding and shore installations in South China have also been significantly expanded and modernized, most noteworthy being the construction of a drydock at Yulin on Hainan Island.

29. Most of the modern and sophisticated naval equipment continues to be assigned to the North Sea Fleet, where the more advanced training and test activity is carried out. All R-class submarines, the G-class submarine, and most of the guided-missile boats are assigned to this fleet.

30. The CCN's troop lift capability with amphibious ships and landing craft is about 2 plus infantry divisions (33,000 troops) or 1 infantry and 1 artillery division (20,300 troops), but amphibious training appears to receive little emphasis. In port-to-port operations, ships of the merchant marine fleet could deliver about 4 infantry divisions (up to 49,000 troops). In addition, in operations where the use of smaller ships and craft is feasible, the Chinese could employ literally thousands of junks for transporting troops and light equipment. The amphibious force is aging and replacement will soon be required if the present capability is to be maintained. Construction of landing craft (LCM) is taking place as much for civilian use as in possible naval use.

31. The CCNAF is predominantly an air defense force. It includes both fighter and jet light bomber regiments. All naval operational fighters are assigned to air defense. Although administratively controlled by CCNAF headquarters at Peking through the fleet headquarters, in their air defense role fighter units are operationally controlled by the CCAF. The bomber regiments are used for patrol and bombing activities in coastal areas and are controlled by the fleet headquarters. A few of the IL-28 regiments have a limited torpedo attack capability.

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